

NOSTALGIA

Pioneering the Atom Bomb, a revolutionary reactor and cinema

MIKE PETTY AND JAMES MILNER LOOK THROUGH THE CAMBRIDGE NEWS ARCHIVES AT SOME OF THE STORIES FROM THIS DAY IN THE PAST

Old pumps creak back into action - 1976

ANCIENT village pumps could creak back into action if the drought crisis deepens.

The idea has been put forward by Pampisford parish council which has decided to call in experts to see if its own village pumps can be put into working order.

There are probably more than 100 pumps in the district, many sadly neglected and dilapidated. Some date back around a hundred years and almost all are out of working order after falling into disrepair with the introduction of piped water supplies to the rural areas.

Since local councils lost responsibility for water supplies, there has been a long-running dispute about their ownership though there is usually a tremendous row if anybody wants to get rid of them.

Revolutionary reactor built by Pye - 1964

A TRANSISTORISED nuclear reactor developed by Pye Ltd is cheap yet provides immense opportunities in the field of research.

It will produce short-lived isotopes for medical diagnosis and neutron activation.

The reactor was built under licence to an American company and modified to raise the power to 100 kilowatts.

In the event of overheating, boiling water within the reactor shuts down the output of the pile.

Accidentally-dropped radioactive material is far more likely to bring the warning system into use than uncontrolled goings-on within the system.

Library opens to complaints - 1963

MINUTES after the opening Cherry Hinton's new branch library by the Mayor of Cambridge, there were complaints that working men cannot get there before it closes at 7pm and it should stay open an extra hour.

There has been a library of sorts for many years.

Originally, books were kept in a locked bookcase at the entrance to the Church of England School in the High Street. It moved to Colville School in the mid-1950s.

Now, work has started on Newmarket Road library, after which another will be constructed on Arbury Road.

3-D film screening - 1953

MAN in the Dark, the first feature-length, three-dimensional film to be shown in the Eastern counties was screened at the Rex Cinema, Cambridge, to an invited audience.

They went away feeling they had witnessed the most exciting event in screen history since The Jazz Singer introduced sound in 1927.

Mr R Halliwell, the manager, said the extra charge for admission covered only the cost of hiring the polaroid spectacles.

The three-dimensional film holds such possibilities of screen terror that the deepies may tend at first to be creepies.

To what extent Cambridge will succumb to third-dementia remains to be seen but the preview audience spent an enjoyable time.

Cambridge 'home' of Atomic Bomb - 1945

THE development of the Atom Bomb owes much to youthful scientists at laboratories at Cambridge. Theirs was the routine research work carried on in peacetime.

In charge of experiments in Cambridge were men who had worked in the past with the late Lord Rutherford, the man who, in the world-famous Cavendish Laboratory, first brought the atom to public notice.

His studies of radioactivity lead to the discovery of the nucleus - the minute body at the centre of the atom in which such enormous energy is imprisoned.

The work of these scientists was one of the great secrets of the war and the men engaged on it were



pledged to complete and absolute secrecy.

No fewer than four members of the technical committee set up to co-ordinate different sections of the work were men who have close to associations with Cambridge.

Sir James Chadwick, leader of the scientific team in America and Professor of Physics at Liverpool University, and Professor M.L.E. Oliphant of Birmingham University, were both Cavendish Laboratory men before they took up their present posts.

The other two Cambridge members of the Technical Committee are Professor J D Cockcroft, Jacksonian Professor of Natural Philosophy, and Dr Norman Feather, university lecturer at the Cavendish.

Sir Lawrence Bragg, Cavendish Professor of Experimental Physics, said the men mentioned as leaders of the British team were brought together here by Lord Rutherford. Both Chadwick and Oliphant were Rutherford's henchmen at Cambridge.

Chadwick worked with Rutherford at Manchester in the early days of radioactivity and came to Cambridge with him just after the end of the last war. He later became his right-hand man as director of his research team and later went to Liverpool.

It was while at Cambridge that Chadwick discovered the neutron. Cockcroft also made history here by being the first man to obtain detailed definite evidence of the

artificial splitting of the atom.

Slum Clearance Campaign - 1936

IT is an easy matter to pull down slum dwellings - many are falling down of their own accord.

But it is not an easy matter to rehouse the low-paid occupants and give them good living facilities at prices they can afford.

The Slum Clearance Campaign runs the grave risk of putting them into better dwellings in which they will be poorer owing to higher rents and other charges.

As a result the new dwellings will rapidly develop into slums.

The answer is to build new towns around factories in the countryside, like at Corby where a community has grown up around new iron works.

Free Library expenditure - 1908

CAMBRIDGE Free Library never gave details of their expenditure and

it was wrong that a large spending committee should keep its operations in the dark.

Members of the committee supplied goods to the library, it might be lawful but it was not expedient, a councillor claimed.

But Mr Bowes had been a benefactor to the library whose advice had been invaluable and supplied books on the same terms as to other people.

King's Parade fire - 1906

CAMBRIDGE Fire Brigade undoubtedly saved a portion of King's Parade, St Edward's Passage and Peas Hill from destruction by fire.

There are numerous old houses, warehouses, sheds and outhouses of all descriptions, many constructed chiefly of wood.

It broke out at Mons Buol's bakery, 17 King's Parade; the bakehouse was gutted and hundreds of pounds of chocolate, almonds and sugar damaged.

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